

## What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

## How EQIP Works

Details about eligible practices and cost share rates are announced each year. NRCS evaluates each application, and higher rankings are given to those that use cost-effective conservation practices, address local and national priorities, and provide the greatest environmental benefit.

Farmers will develop a conservation plan, if they don't already have one, for the acreage affected by the EQIP practices. Conservation practices must meet NRCS technical standards. Farmers may elect to use an approved third-party provider for technical assistance.



## Timeline

After a conservation plan is complete, a landowner may sign up for EQIP at any time throughout the year.

**The 2005 closing date for sign-up is May 27.** Applications received after May 27 will be held until the next closing date.



## Step One

### Develop a Conservation Plan

Interested landowners should contact their NRCS field office to sign up for assistance in completing a conservation plan.

A conservation plan describes the landowner's goals and objectives for the land and assesses resource concerns and opportunities such as water quality and quantity, flood control, rangeland condition, wildlife habitat, soil quality, and biodiversity. The plan also includes a list of conservation practices compatible with the landowner's objectives and a schedule for installing and maintaining them.

Planning assistance is available on a first come-first served basis with priority given to prior-year deferred program applications.

## Step Two

### Apply for Cost-Share Assistance

EQIP typically cost-shares between 50 and 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Limited-resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-share assistance.

Incentive payments may be provided to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use such as nutrient management, integrated pest management and manure management.

The EQIP cost-share agreement lasts from two to ten years from the date the contract is signed. Under the agreement, the landowner agrees to maintain the cost-shared practices and allow NRCS access to monitor the effectiveness of the practices.

## Alaska Priorities

The 2005 EQIP priorities all have equal status and are:

- Reducing non-point source pollutants;
- Reducing soil erosion and sedimentation;
- Promoting the conservation of at-risk species;
- Improving grazing lands health.

## Who's Eligible?

Any farmer engaged in livestock or crop production on eligible land may apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, and private non-industrial forestland.



## Examples of EQIP Practices

Your local NRCS field office can provide information about how EQIP might work on your land. Some conservation practices that are eligible for cost-share support include:

- Improving the health of grazing lands through the installation of cross fencing and watering facilities to allow for prescribed grazing;
- Reducing erosion and sedimentation through the installation of grassed waterways, sediment basins, and filter strips;
- Reducing non-point source pollutants by installing animal waste storage facilities;
- Reducing erosion and off-site sedimentation on forestland by constructing forest harvest trails and landings.



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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Alaska

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider